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Avalanche Notes

U.S. Forest Service
Westwide Avalanche Network

APRIL, 1978

Snowfall in April was generally adequate around the West, the exception again being the Pacific Northwest which has yet in 1978 to see normal snowfall. For April some snowfall percentages of normal are as follows: Berthoud Pass, 89%; Alta, 140%; Alpine Meadows, 220%; Mammoth Mt., 230%; and Stevens Pass, 58%. Looking at the season's snowfall totals, we can assess the winter at a few selected sites. For November-April, Berthoud Pass recorded an even 400 inches of snow (133% of normal), the 3rd snowiest winter since records began in 1926; Alta, 524.5 inches (110%); Alpine Meadows, 382.5 inches (124%); and Stevens Pass, 394 inches (79%). For December-April, Mammoth Mt. recorded 460.5 inches (159%), second only to the winter of 68-69. For December-March, Aspen recorded 240.5 inches (158%); Vail, 431 inches (180%); Taos, 178.5 inches (108%); Jackson Hole, 370 inches (115%); and Crystal Mt., 144 and 167 inches at the lower and upper study plots, respectively (46%). For Aspen and Vail, this was the snowiest winter in at least 11 years, and for Crystal Mt., it was the second driest on record.

The April avalanche totals show 660 slides at Alpine Meadows. This is the second month of the winter with more than 600 slides at this area, the most active site on the Westwide Avalanche Network.

Two serious avalanche accidents occurred in April, the first leading to the 13th fatality of the season. On the 16th on Mt. Sopris, Colorado, a snowmobiler, riding alone at the time, apparently collapsed a cornice, and both man and machine dropped 300 feet down a steep avalanche chute. This triggered a small avalanche which buried the victim and most of his snowmobile. Two days later searchers located the body beneath 1 foot of ice-hard snow. This is the fifth recorded snowmobile-avalanche fatality. A curious footnote to this accident is that 4 days earlier another snowmobiler on the same mountain soared off a cornice under full power and plunged 1800 feet to his death. No avalanche occurred in this accident.

The second mishap occurred on the 23rd at Panorama Point in Mt. Rainier National Park, the scene of several avalanche incidents in the past. Nine persons--variously on foot, skis, and snowshoes--were at different stages of switchbacking up the slope when it fractured above all of them. Seven were caught, four of whom were partly buried and two completely buried. All victims were located within 15 minutes, and luckily no injuries occurred.

The season's avalanche statistics thru April are tabulated below:

AREA	TOTAL AVALANCHES REPORTED		DAMAGE SUMMARY - THIS WINTER								
	THIS MONTH	THIS WINTER	PEOPLE				VEHICLES		AVALANCHE DAMAGED		
			C	B	I	K	B	D	BLDGS	LIFTS	MISC
Central and So. Rockies	179	2452	34	13	3	4	6	2	1	0	2
Intermountain	125	2607	43	13	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
West Coast	1057	5793	43	21	3	8	12	3	4	2	0
All Areas	1361	10852	120	47	9	12	18	5	5	2	2

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U.S. FOREST SERVICE
ALPINE SNOW AND AVALANCHE RESEARCH PROJECT
RM STATION FORT COLLINS, COLO.

APRIL 1978

SUMMARY OF WEATHER AND SNOW CONDITIONS

AREA	SNOWFALL			WATER-EQUIVALENT										SNOW DEPTH				TEMPERATURE			WIND-SPEED AND DIRECTION																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																							
	TOTAL SNOW-FALL IN.	MAX IN.	DAYS	TOTAL WATER IN.	24 HR. IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX IN.	DAYS	NUMBER OF DAYS	MAX

-- DATA INCOMPLETE OR MISSING
M--ONE OR MORE DAYS OF RECORD--MISSING--IF AVERAGE VALUE IS ENTERED, LESS THAN 10 DAYS--RECORD IS MISSING
IF M IS ENTERED IN WIND SPEED COLUMN, LESS THAN 3/ 6-HOUR PERIODS ARE MISSING
GE--GRFATER THAN OR EQUAL TO

U.S. FOREST SERVICE

1961

AVALANCHE SUMMARY

TOTAL	TOTAL	DATES OF		NUMBER OF DAYS WITH	TYPE OF AVALANCHE	FRACTURE LINE HEIGHTS IN FEET	VERTICAL DESCENT IN FEET	AVALANCHES ACROSS MAJOR ACCESS ROADS NO.
A V L S	A V L S			A V L S	N SLABS			
A V L S	A V L S			A V L S	R T U H S			
					I F C L D T I E			
THIS MONTH NO.	THIS WINTER NO.	F I R S T	MAX IN ONE DAY NO.	L S	S	GE GE GE 2 4 6	GL GE OF 700 500 1000	---NUMBER--- FEET
AREA								

CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAINS

[illegible]

INTERMOUNTAIN

ALTA, UTAH	52	587	3	29	12	3	10	1	51	1	1	51	0	1	0	0	51	20	1 1000	
SLIDE MTN, NEVADA	2	11	7	7	2	7	1	2	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0 600	
SNOBIRD, UTAH	71	746	1	29	21	14	11	0	66	5	1	66	0	4	14	1	0	65	46	0 1200

--=DATA-INCOMPLETE-OR-MISSING-
GE=GREATER THAN OR EQUAL TO
+=ALSO OCCURRED ON OTHER DATES

U.S. FOREST SERVICE

APRIL 19/8
AVALANCHE SUMMARY

WEST COAST

ALPINE MEADOWS, CAL	560	2502	1	27	149	16	11	0	635	25	0	585	10	65	31	2	0	481	79	0	750
ALYESKA, ALASKA	21	347	27	27	21	27	1	1	21	0	0	21	0	0	10	0	0	21	17	0	1400
CRYSTAL MTN, WASH	11	50	5	28	10	5	2	0	9	2	0	10	1	0	1	1	0	11	0	0	400
EAGLECREST, ALASKA	3	40	19	19	3	19	1	1	3	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	400
HEAVENLY VALLEY, CAL	6	57	17	21	5	21	2	0	6	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	150
JUNE MOUNTAIN, CALIF	5	90	6	16	3	6	2	1	5	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	200
KIRKWOOD MDWS, CAL	87	270	1	26	18	7	12	10	67	20	8	38	0	41	18	2	0	80	17	0	000+
MAMMOTH MTN, CALIF	88	333	3	26	25	5+	4	4	88	0	0	88	0	0	39	1	0	78	61	3	1100
MISSION RIDGE, WASH	7	101	6	13	5	6	3	3	7	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	140
SQUAW VALLEY, CALIF	151	720	6	27	51	6	7	0	151	0	0	145	6	0	19	0	0	150	35	3	1200
SUGAR BOWL, CALIF	17	86	16	20	9	16	2	3	17	0	0	17	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	250

---=DATA INCOMPLETE OR MISSING

GE=GREATER THAN OR EQUAL TO

* = ALSO OCCURRED ON OTHER DATES

